The Business *Health Check*

Score your business on eight plain questions, find the one spot to fix first, and leave with a 90-day plan.

WHAT YOU'LL HAVE WHEN YOU FINISH

A score for your business as it runs today, the one area to fix first, a first task with a date on it, and a date to check again.

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The mistake

The mistake is thinking a business that's still standing after all these years is a healthy business.

You've made it through slow seasons, price hikes, at least one platform that changed its rules overnight, and probably a program or two that promised more than it delivered. That's real experience. It still doesn't tell you where the business stands right now, and you know that better than most.

Staying open proves you're stubborn enough to keep something going. Your margins, your money tracking and where your next customer comes from are separate questions. Plenty of businesses run for ten years on momentum and an owner who quietly covers every gap themselves. Your instincts got you here. This guide gives you eight questions to check them against.

How this works

Read the four short sections first. Each one ends with a quick prompt. Then fill in the scorecard on page 8 and the action plan on page 9. Page 7 shows one filled in, so you can see what a finished one looks like. Plan on about 30 minutes with a pen.

> **BEFORE YOU START**
>
> 1. Write down the last time you looked at what your business actually kept, not just your bank balance.
> 2. Name the one part of your business you've been putting off checking.
> 3. Clear 30 minutes and grab a pen.

1. What years in business actually proves

Ask most owners how their business is doing and they'll answer with how long they've been open. "I've been doing this eight years." "I made it through the slow stretch." That answers a different question.

Time in business proves you can keep something alive. A business can run for a decade on word of mouth, a few loyal repeat customers, and an owner working around problems nobody ever checked. In that business, the owner holds everything up with effort. A healthy business holds more of its own weight.

The businesses that close in year eight or ten usually don't close because of one dramatic thing. Something ordinary went unchecked for too long: a margin that slipped below zero, the one referral source that moved away, a big bill nobody planned for. None of it looks like a crisis until it's expensive to fix.

The good news is that ordinary problems are easy to fix when you catch them early. That's the whole point of the scorecard.

2. How to score yourself

You'll score eight areas from 1 to 5. Use this key so a 3 means the same thing every time.

1	No, or I don't know.
2	Sometimes, but nothing is written down.
3	Yes, roughly. It's out of date, or I'd have to dig for it.
4	Yes. It's written down and mostly current.
5	Yes, and I could show you proof today.

The one rule: next to every score, write the evidence. That means the thing you could actually show someone, like a spreadsheet, an account, a list or a number. If you can't name any evidence, the score is 2 or lower. Score how the business runs today, not how you meant it to run.

3. The eight areas, and what counts as evidence

AREA	THE QUESTION	EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE
1. Profit	Do you know what you actually keep after costs, not just what came in?	A number for last month that you can write down right now.
2. Money tracking	Do you have a written system for tracking money in and out?	A spreadsheet, app or ledger updated in the last 30 days.
3. Where customers come from	Do you know where your customers actually come from?	You can name how your last 10 customers found you.
4. Payment terms	Does every customer get the same written terms for how and when they pay?	An invoice, a terms line on your site, or a written policy.
5. Separate money	Is your business money in its own account, apart from yours?	A business-only account with no personal spending in the last 3 months.
6. Busy and slow months	Do you know your busiest and slowest months, and plan for them?	You can name them, and you set money aside before the slow ones.
7. Written down	Is the way your business runs written down anywhere besides your head?	At least one written process somebody else could follow.
8. Broken or annoying	Do you know which problems cost you money and which only cost you patience?	A list of current problems with a rough dollar cost next to each.

What your total means

This is a self-check, so read the total as a rough snapshot. Two or three points either way doesn't change much. Your lowest line matters more than your total.

32 to 40	The basics are in place. Your job now is keeping them current.
20 to 31	Strong in some spots, thin in others. Your lowest scores show you where.
8 to 19	Instinct and effort have carried you this far. Adding some structure underneath lets the business carry more of the weight for you.

4. The three things most businesses this age have wrong

Most owners can guess something's off. What surprises them is which three things it usually is. They line up with areas 1, 5 and 3 on the scorecard.

Prices nobody went back to. You set your prices years ago, when your costs, your time and your confidence were all different. Materials went up. Processing fees went up. Your skill went up too, and you never charged for that either. Most owners raise prices only when something forces them to, like a supplier hike or a bad quarter. Until then, the gap between what you charge and what the work is worth costs you every month.

Business and personal money in one account. One account felt simpler in year one. Years later, it means you can't answer "did the business make money?" without digging through your own bank statements. Every personal purchase blurs your profit, and every business purchase blurs your household budget.

No second way to get customers. Word of mouth is a real way to get customers, and you don't control it. If most of your customers come from referrals and you can't name a second source, a slow referral month means a slow month, full stop. A second source you can turn up when you need it is what a marketing system is.

None of these shows up as an emergency. They show up as a business that works harder than it should for less than it should.

> **DO THIS FOR WHICHEVER ONE HITS CLOSEST**
>
> 1. Work out your true cost on your best-selling item or service, using this year's prices.
> 2. Open a business-only account this week if you don't have one. Most banks let you do it online.
> 3. List where your last 10 customers actually came from.

5. Broken or annoying

Area 8 is the one owners argue with most. After years in business you have a high tolerance for chaos, and "I've dealt with worse" starts covering things that never got dealt with.

Annoying is the customer who always pays four days late but always pays. Broken is not knowing what happens to your cash if two of them do it in the same month. Annoying is a slow supplier. Broken is having no backup if that supplier disappears. The test is simple: does it cost you money, or just patience? Most owners fix the loud, annoying things first, while the broken ones stay quiet until they get expensive.

> **SORT YOUR OWN LIST**
>
> 1. Write down the three things about your business that bother you most right now.
> 2. Next to each, write what it would cost you in real dollars if it stayed exactly the same for another year.
> 3. Anything with a real dollar cost goes to the top.

6. Turn your score into one fix

Whatever your total, the next move is the same: one area, one specific action, done this month. Eight good intentions at once usually turn into zero.

How to pick your one fix

1. Circle your lowest score on the scorecard.
2. If two or more areas tie, pick the one that costs you real money. Your broken-or-annoying list helps here.
3. If your lowest area is something you truly can't change this quarter, take the next lowest.

How to write the plan

Write what a 4 would look like in that area, in one sentence. That's your target. Then write a first task that takes under an hour and has a date on it. "Work on pricing" is a wish. "List every cost for my most-booked package on Sunday" is a task. Last, put a date 90 days out on your calendar to score the whole sheet again, so you can see what moved.

Leave the rest of the sheet alone until this one is handled. The strengths that kept your business running this long will keep carrying it while you fix one thing at a time.

Here's one filled in

Dana runs a catering business and is in her sixth year. Here's her scorecard and plan.

AREA	SCORE	HER EVIDENCE
1. Profit	**2**	*I know what came in last month. I don't know what I kept.*
2. Money tracking	**3**	*Spreadsheet exists. Last updated in August.*
3. Where customers come from	**2**	*"Word of mouth," I think. Couldn't name 10.*
4. Payment terms	**3**	*50% deposit, but I only ever say it in texts.*
5. Separate money	**5**	*Business account since year 2. Nothing personal on it.*
6. Busy and slow months	**4**	*Slow in January and February. I save in November.*
7. Written down	**2**	*All in my head.*
8. Broken or annoying	**3**	*Made the list. Two items have a dollar cost.*
Total	**24**	*Strong in spots, thin in others.*

Profit, customers and written down tie at 2. Profit costs her money every single event, so that's her one fix.

Area I'm fixing	*Profit*
What a 4 looks like	*I know what I keep on each of my 3 most-booked packages, using this year's costs, and it's written down.*
My one fix	*Work out the true cost of my 3 most-booked packages and raise any that don't leave me enough.*
First task	*List every cost for my most-booked package: food, staff hours, rentals, gas, card fees.*
Who does it	*Me*
Done by	*Sunday, October 11*
Check again on	*January 4*

Your Business Health Scorecard

Date: _____ Score 1 to 5 using the key on page 3. No evidence means 2 or lower.

AREA	SCORE	EVIDENCE (WHAT COULD YOU SHOW SOMEONE?)
1. Profit What you keep after costs		
2. Money tracking Written, updated in 30 days		
3. Where customers come from Your last 10, by source		
4. Payment terms Same written terms for all		
5. Separate money Business-only account		
6. Busy and slow months Named and planned for		
7. Written down One process someone could follow		
8. Broken or annoying Problems with a dollar cost		
Total (out of 40)		32 to 40: keep it current · 20 to 31: strong in spots · 8 to 19: add structure

Your 90-day action plan

The area I'm fixing

Your lowest score. If there's a tie, the one that costs you money.

What a 4 would look like here

One sentence. This is your target.

My one fix

First task

Under an hour, with a date on it.

Who does it

Done by

Check again on

90 days from today. Put it on your calendar now.

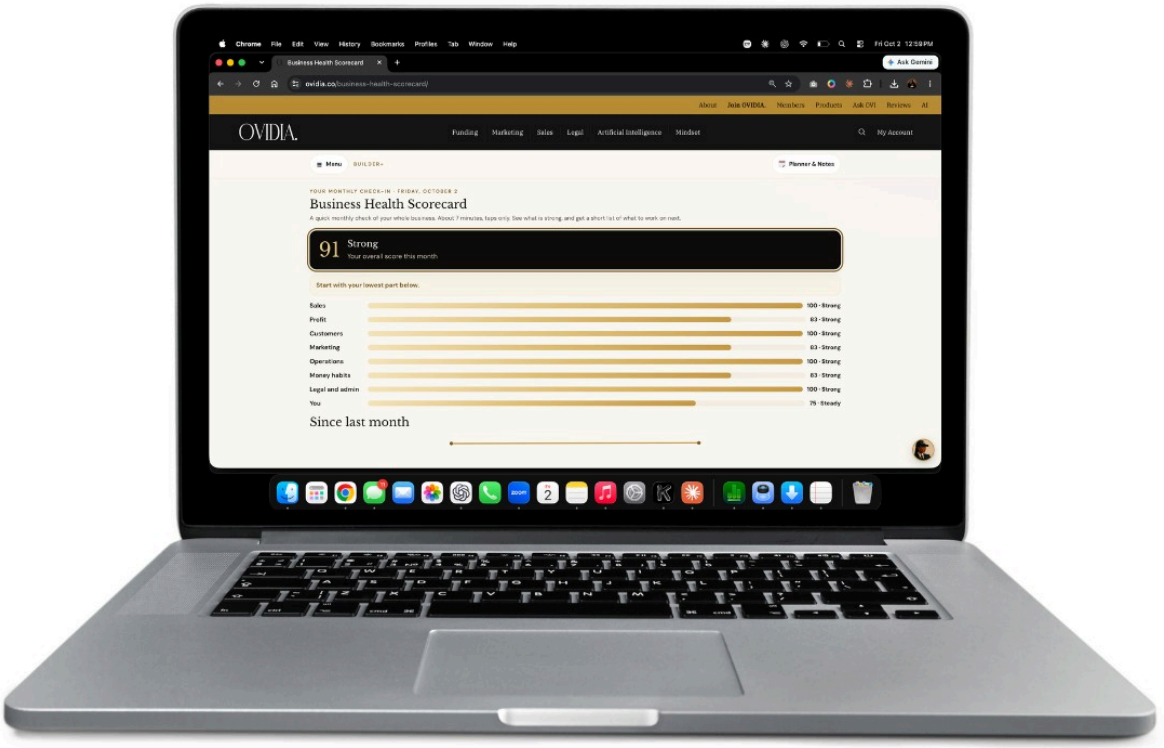
YOU'RE FINISHED WHEN YOU HAVE

- ☐ A score in every row, with evidence next to it
- ☐ Your total, and your lowest area circled
- ☐ One fix, written in one sentence
- ☐ A first task with a date on your calendar
- ☐ A check-again date 90 days out

Where this leaves you

You now have a snapshot of your business as it runs today, and one fix with a date on it. That's more than most owners know about their own business, and you got it in about 30 minutes.

The next job is doing the fix, then checking again so you can see what moved. Inside Builder+, the Business Health Scorecard runs a deeper version of this check every month, in about 7 minutes, and saves every result, so you can see how this month compares to last month. Then Plan My Week in your HQ turns your one fix into the tasks you'll do this week, so it gets done instead of sitting on a page.



If you want a monthly check that remembers last month and your fix to land on this week's list, start your free trial of Builder+.

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